

VALLEY PUBLIC RADIO

Governor Newsom Visits Valley To Hear Challenges Of Unclean Drinking Water

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By: Kerry Klein

Of all the ground Governor Gavin Newsom covered in his first week in office, he already appears to be showing a commitment to improving the state's drinking water.

On Friday, Governor Newsom took a road trip to Monterey Park Tract, an unincorporated community in Stanislaus County. There, he and his entourage heard concerns from residents about their drinking water, which they pipe in from the nearby city of Ceres and is known to contain a carcinogen known as 1,2,3-TCP.



Governor Gavin Newsom greets residents of the Stanislaus County unincorporated community of Monterey Park Tract to discuss drinking water on January 11, 2018.

Jessi Snyder of the non-profit Self-Help Enterprises says she was impressed with how intently Newsom listened. "I love that he had his entire cabinet there," she says. "It was so amazing to see all of them filling up the room."

This followed a day after the new governor had introduced a preliminary state budget, in which he proposed creating a fund to help communities access safe and affordable drinking water. "As of Friday, I think he'd been four days in office," Snyder says. "Those are two really strong signs of leadership and priorities."

As of now, Newsom proposes seeding the fund with \$4.9 million from the state's General Fund, then sustaining it by establishing fees on dairy producers and water users. Former Governor Jerry Brown had supported a similar fund in 2018, but had abandoned it after failing to find enough backing from state legislators.

An earlier version of this story misnamed the community Newsom visited as Monterey Tract, and incorrectly stated that the water in Ceres contains high levels of arsenic.